



THE JEWISH GAILY

# FORWARD

SHA'AR ZAHAV

שער זהב

5740 DEC 1979

## channukah party

Friday evening, December 14, we will be celebrating our annual Channukah service, followed by a latke party. Services will begin promptly at 7 p.m., which is one hour earlier than usual. Please plan to arrive a little bit early to drop off your latke supplies. Each person or couple should bring a 5 pound sack of potatoes and three onions.

Volunteers are needed to help transform those raw materials into fresh golden latkes. We are counting on you! This party will be especially designed for those of you who have children, so make sure you bring them. For the past two years, this has been our most successful social event.

# from where i stand

There are times when I have so many things that I want to share with you that I just don't know where to begin. This time is one of them. Perhaps without elaborating on it I can get away with saying that the two week trip to the East Coast was worth every second of time spent there. Visiting with four of the five synagogues which have an outreach to lesbian and gay Jews on the coast, I learned more about the state of our siblings and their religious habits than I could ever have hoped to learn in any other fashion. The receptions were warm and wonderful, and I think the educational interchanges and times for sharing were, and will continue to be, beneficial for everyone concerned.

The greatest excitement for me came during a meeting with Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. I had stopped at the U.A.H.C. building in New York, not expecting to be able to see him because of his very busy schedule. Much to my surprise I was asked to return the next morning for a short meeting.

As I have said before, I believe that our meeting may have been an historic turning point in gay and lesbian Jewish history. Within a half an hour, we had shared some common concerns, a little bit about each other, and having reviewed a little bit of the history of lesbian and gay Jews in this country, Rabbi Schindler suggested that I prepare a program to present at the May national board meeting of the U.A.H.C., where I would address these national leaders on the subject of what it means to be gay and Jewish in 1980. It is my understanding that I may bring additional resource people with me for this presentation, and that is what I have made plans to do. The intent of this presentation, as I understand it, is to begin the process of re-educating liberal American Jews on the subject of human sexuality with specific emphasis on homosexuality.

The very thought that such a program would be encouraged by the highest echelons of American Reform Judaism is heartening enough; that it should be a

program, beginning at a national U.A.H.C. board meeting, is more than I had ever expected. For that reason I am particularly optimistic about this turn of events, and I'm extremely grateful to Rabbi Schindler for his sensitivity and his humanity. His realization that our situation is also his situation is some of the best news that I've heard in a long time!

I was also encouraged by the willingness of the other synagogues which I visited to become more actively involved in an information-sharing network, so that we would not exist with feeling of such isolation from one another. Already I have begun receiving the liturgical materials from each of the groups, so that we may have a worship materials clearinghouse and library for use by our sibling congregations.

Finally, while I saw and heard much on the trip which reminded me of how far we have yet to go, both as individual synagogues and as a cooperative force within Judaism, I also was able to get a little bit better perspective on the point to which we have come, and some places to which we can go from here. I remain hopeful, and I anticipate with great enthusiasm the approach of the Fifth International Conference of Lesbian and Gay Jews, which we are hoping to host here in San Francisco in late August. It will be a wonderful time of sharing and learning, for exchanging views and creating new forums for discussion together. All in all, things seem to be looking up!

*Allen*

## reminder

Just a reminder, if you have recently moved or, more importantly, are planning to move, please send a change of address card to our Congregation at P. O. Box 5640, San Francisco, CA 94101 right away. Otherwise, it costs us 25¢ to get your change of address from the Post Office.



Participating in the Senior Outreach Program are (top to bottom) Laurie Radovsky, Allan Bennett Ron Lezell, Leila Raim, Jordan Lee, Dr. Sam Thal, Tal'or Bar-Shank.

## senior outreach

Seven members of Sha'ar Zahav are participating in the senior outreach program visiting the elderly Jewish residents of the Hampshire Convalescent Hospital. This is the hospital that our congregation has adopted to help them celebrate Jewish holidays and bring cheer and what help we can.

We approached our first visit with some insecurity not knowing just what to expect. Rabbi Bennett met with our group before the visit and accompanied us to the Hospital which was most reassuring and helpful.

We were warmly welcomed by the staff of the Hospital who went out of their way to help make our visits a success. The hospital administrator had made the necessary arrangements ahead of our visits so we could easily find the patients and had a place to visit them. Their help was greatly appreciated.

All of us enjoyed the visit and got quite an education in the process. One of the residents, who refused to give her age, described the 1906 earthquake in vivid detail. Her memory was excellent, and she had some exciting experiences to tell. We will never read a story of early San Francisco again without thinking of her.

Our next visit will be for Chanukah on Saturday, December 15, at 2 o'clock. We can use more visitors and invite all members to join us in this rewarding and worthwhile activity. It's a mitzvah. Call Sam at 285-6845 for information.

## letters to the editor

Letter to the staff of the Jewish Gaily FORWARD

Perhaps one reason you don't get more support from those of us "out there" is that we can't be/aren't or don't choose to be totally out of the closet. Yet, your paper constantly prints people's names (first and last) without any regard for privacy. I'd love to make a donation or join a committee or whatever, but I don't feel I want to have my name listed in your bulletin if I forget to indicate each time that I'd like my privacy respected.

A Jewish Sister

In response to a letter we received recently, I felt a need to clarify our synagogue's position on a matter of some concern. The letter expressed reluctance to be involved with Sha'ar Zahav because of the threat to an individual's "privacy", or, as the writer put it, "Perhaps one reason you don't get more support from those of us 'out here' is that we can't be/aren't/or don't choose to be totally 'out of the closet.'

The assumption which the writer makes is that we print full names of people in our newsletter without any regard for privacy. The opposite is the case. It has always been our policy to print only the names of those who feel that the appearance of their names poses no threat of any kind to them. And we always respect the wishes of those who choose to remain anonymous. In fact, all synagogues operate on this principle. The highest form of charity about which Maimonides speaks is from an anonymous donor through a charitable organization which reaches a recipient whom the donor doesn't know.

It was our hope that potential contributors, either of money or of other things, such as personal time or service commitment, would be aware that we would like to feel free to include the names of all those who are actively involved with us, on any level. But, realizing that we do not yet have that longed-for security, we simply ask that anyone wishing to remain anonymous, in any context, let us know their wishes, knowing that we shall follow them.

Surely it cannot be too great an effort for someone making a donation (which usually means some personal sacrifice), and wishing to remain anonymous, to indicate that at the time of making the donation.

Our goals include trying to fully integrate our Jewishness with our sexuality, and we know how destructive closets are for either one. We continue to hope that involvement with us will gently, but permanently, open closet doors. Yet we know that the process operates at different paces for different folks, and for that reason, we will continue to respect the need for "privacy" requested by our Jewish sister.

# outreach

The Outreach Committee would like to alert members and friends fo Sha'ar Zahav to some current opportunities for social and political contributions to the Jewish and gay communities. First, the congregation is sponsoring a group of holiday visits to Jewish patients at Hampshire Convalescent Hospital located at 1420 Hampshire in San Francisco. Under the leadership of Sam Thal, we have already paid two visits and the there, a Channukah remembrance, is scheduled for December 15, at 1 p.m. Participation by you is guaranteed to fulfill your humanitarian instincts.

Second, you will find in this newsletter information and membership forms for the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) and California Human Rights Advocates (CHRA). These two organizations are the gay community's lobbyists in Washington and Sacramento, working full time to achieve the passage of federal and state gay rights legislation. We believe that the work GRNL and CHRA are doing is vital to the gay community; we strongly urge you to look over the enclosed materials and consider joining both! Also you will find an announcement and reservation form for the state-wide March on Sacramento for Lesbian and Gay Rights and Constituent Lobbying Day, to be hald on Sunday, January 13 and Monday January 14, 1980. The March is on Sunday and the Lobbying day is Monday). Round trip bus fare to Sacramento on our special Sha'ar Zahav Capitol Express will be \$~~10~~ each day. (To avoid the necessity and expense of an overnite stay in Sacramento, we plan to go and return each day). If you wish to be a part of this sure-to-be-unforgettable experience, please return your check and reservation forms no later than Friday evening January 4, 1980. If you couldn't march on Washington in October, you now have a chance to participate in an equally urgent and historic event.

# guidelines for services

At the December Va'ad meeting, the following guidelines for Shabbat Services were ratified. Because Sha'ar Zahav has an open pulpit policy, it was felt that some outline was needed. A session of the workshop required for leading services will be scheduled soon. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Chair of the Ritual Committee, Laurie Radovsky (56 Sanches #6, San Francisco, CA 94114 or 861-4142.)

## PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR SERVICES

Any member of the congregation can lead services. The only prerequisite for leading services is attendance at the congregation's liturgical workshop.

Services are basically composed of religious worship, the Torah reading, and a sermon. Individuals leading services need not perform all three parts. While they have overall responsibility for the planning and execution of the service, they may delegate responsibility for portions of it to others.

The individual who has taken responsibility for a service will be required to present to the Ritual Committee Chairperson an outline of the proposed service. Outlined below are the three parts of the service, and what will be required:

### Religious Worship

The religious portion of the service must include the following:

1. candle lighting
2. Lecha Dodi or a suitable substitute
3. Boruch Hu
4. Shema and V'Ahavta
5. Amidah
6. Aleinu
7. Kaddish
8. closing hymn (e.g. Sholom Aleichem, Adon Olam, Yigdal)
9. Kiddush and Hamotzi

## Torah Service

The purpose of the Torah service is to educate the congregation in the essence of Judaic tradition and continuity. Therefore, fulfillment of this portion's requirement can be accomplished by any one of the following:

1. Reading part or all of the Torah portion of the week (in English or Hebrew)
2. Reading all or part of the Haftarah portion (in English or Hebrew)
3. Reading from Tanach (scriptures) or a commentary on Tanach
4. Discussion of the weekly Torah portion in a manner in which the sermon and Torah service are merged

If (1) or (2) are chosen, all the appropriate opening and closing prayers must be included.

## Sermon

Sermon topics can include/can be based upon:

1. Torah portion or other Scriptural text
2. synagogue affairs
3. Jewish communal interests
4. civic concerns, either of the gay community or the community at large

Sermons cannot include personal condemnations or partisan political endorsements.

We welcome any experimentation and creativity which goes beyond the above guidelines, but these must be agreed to in advance by the Ritual Committee Chairperson. The Ritual Committee invites individuals who wish to lead services to take advantage of resource individuals and groups for consultation and support (contact Ritual Committee Chairperson for names).

# oneg

The congregation wishes to thank the following people for their participation, sharing, and sponsorships of the Oneg program:

November 9

Beauregard Lowell, honoring Danies Chesir in appreciation for his devotion to the congregation

November 16

Leila Raimes, in celebration of the reunion of she and her lover Catherine, and their fourth anniversary.

November 23

Jordan Lee, in cooperation with his friend David, the memory of Jordan's Father's Yahrzeit.

November 30

Ellis Jacobs and Jerry Moore, in celebration of the aquisition of their new home.

December 7

Earl Diskin, celebrating the birthday of Alan Shrager

# program

On Friday, January 18, 1980, Professor William (Zev) Brinner of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at U.C. Berkeley will speak to the congregation after services. He is one of the leading scholars in his field, and one of those people most informed about the situation in the Middle East at this time

# donations

## DONATIONS

Thanks to the following for their gifts to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav:

Jason Bartel  
Daniel Chesir  
Dr. Quinten Corbenic  
Donald Dodge and Jerome Singer  
Saul Held  
Howard Lader  
Ellen Lewin  
Gerald Rosenstein  
Seth Sapiro  
Stanley Strauss  
Dr. Sam Thal  
Patricia Warner

If you would like to donate to the Congregation in honor of an event (a new residence, car, etc) or in the memory of someone, such contributions will be graciously accepted by Sha'ar Zahav. Contribution in any amount (\$2.00 minimum) will be most welcome. If you would like your contribution not acknowledged in the FORWARD, please note that on your check.

## oneg committee

There will be an open meeting of the Oneg Committee for members and all interested in being involved in Onegs on Wednesday, December 12, 1979 at 7:30 p.m. at David Gass' residence at 1833 Hayes Street, San Francisco.

Please plan to attend. We will expeditiously discuss committee policies, responsibilities and elect a new chair. Oneg sponsorships are available starting January 11, 1980. Please plan to share some occasion with us this year and sponsor an Oneg.

Shalom  
David Gass

# treasurer's report

Several of you have had unfavorable comments on the Synagogue's policy of "passing the basket" after Shabbat services. As a result, the Va'ad voted to experiment for October (subsequently extended thru November), with not passing the basket.

However, as these funds remain an important source of revenues, the Board decided to have a pushke (collection box) on the greeting table and to make an announcement to that effect at services.

As of this writing, seven weeks of our experiment reveals collections to be approximately 75% of that when we passed the basket. Hopefully, as we all get used to the pushke policy, collections will increase and surpass the pre-pushke days.

On November 9th and 16th, a special collection for the Cambodian Relief Fund enabled Sha'ar Zahav to contribute \$150.00 towards meeting the critical needs of these refugees. If you would like to contribute to this cause, we will gladly forward your contribution to the Northern California Board of Rabbis, who are coordinating this relief effort.

If you are looking for additional tax deductions for 1979, consider accelerating your tax-deductible contributions to Sha'ar Zahav before January 1, 1980.

Shalom,  
Ron Lezell

## congregation sha'ar zahav

Box 5640  
San Francisco, CA 94101  
(415) 626-3131